

# Trails of a Vagabond

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Guy A. Bingham

THE VAGABOND ON LITTLE BEE HIVE

# *Trails of a Vagabond*

by

Donna D'Ette



Look deep into the heart of this little book  
Written by mine own hand;  
Showing the beauties of Canada,  
My adopted land.  
Observe, absorb the beauties here,  
The thoughts I would portray,  
Stop! think! remember! glance not and turn away.



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## NATURE'S SYMPHONY

(After attending a Sunday Symphony one cold and blustering day in December, I walked around to Esplanade Point and standing there looking across the inlet I fancied I could hear an echo of the concert, in the wind.)

I'm standing alone at the Narrows,  
Gazing across the sea,  
Into the heart of the mountains—  
They are calling, calling me.

The wind is blowing, blowing,  
I fancy an undertone,  
Like the big bass viol in the symphony  
As I listen to its moan.

The clarinets are calling, calling,  
Their notes low and sweet,  
The winds take up the echo  
As they fly from peak to peak.

The flutes are trilling, trilling,  
Their clear notes loud and free  
As on the breeze they carry  
Their part in this symphony.

The violins are singing, singing,  
So softly in the breeze,  
I stand alone in wonderment,  
At melodies such as these.

Hear'st thou the symphony that I hear  
As down Capilano it sighs  
Until it reaches the inlet—  
And there it slowly dies.

Though my symphony is ending  
I shall hear it ever more  
For the waves take up the rhythm  
As they beat along the shore.

## CULTUS LAKE

(While holidaying at Cultus Lake in British Columbia, my son, his fiancée and I rode horseback to the head of the lake and were sitting on the grassy bank under the oaks, the following verses came into my mind.)

Smiling down on the tree tops  
Through the leafy green,  
The Sun shines down upon the lake  
With a beautiful golden sheen.

Lying with face upturned  
To an azure sky,  
Thinking of God and His wonders  
As the fleecy clouds drift by.

Does He think I am wonderful;  
As I lie here thinking of Him,  
With His beauties all around me;  
Or does He condemn me for sin?

No; there is NO condemnation;  
Only a kindly smile  
That urges me onward and upward  
For just a little while.

For in this valley of the shadow  
I have a lesson to learn,  
And as I grasp His meaning  
To loftier heights I'll turn.

I thank Thee Father, I love Thee,  
As I lie here thinking with pride  
You have me an heir to Your Kingdom;  
Let this heritage abide.



## BLACK TUSK

(While camping in the Black Tusk Meadows in Garibaldi Park one summer, several of our party climbed Red Mountain, which lies across Garibaldi Lake from the camping site. Crossing the lake we landed at the foot of the mountain, climbed about five hundred feet, and turned to view the scenery. Black Tusk which dominates the park lay directly before us about five miles away, appearing like a huge stair.)

Black Tusk outlined against the sky,  
Thy rugged beauty stern and cold;  
Standing through countless ages past  
Guarding the valley's wealth untold.

At thy foot the flowers bloom,  
Colours rare, rich perfume,  
Indian paint brush, orchids too  
Render homage unto you.

Grim cold glaciers icy breaks  
Reflected in thy steel blue lakes,  
Whence comest thou for us to see—  
To remind us of immortality:

Did Great God in His woodrout care  
Think of us and place you there  
As an altar, that all might see;  
Saying, Come and worship me.





## AN EARLY MORNING RIDE

(One morning while in the Cariboo, I awakened as the grey dawn was breaking over the Lac la Pêche; there was about two feet of ice covered with snow and as I watched the grey light creep slowly up the lake I had a desire to be on a hill-top to see the sunrise.)

The grey dawn is breaking o'er the lake,  
Forerunner of the coming day,  
I'll get me up, and get me out,  
For I would be away

Haste Prince, thou sluggard,  
Eat those oats and hay,  
For the hills are calling me  
And I would be away

We will follow the snowy trails, Boy,  
Up and up we'll go,  
Until we find the highest hill  
Windswept of ice and snow

The wind may blow a gale, sir—  
But never a care have we.  
For the world belongs to us  
As far as we can see.

What! Prince! You're finished!  
You're sure you've had enough?  
For if we beat that sun, boy—  
The going will be tough.

The saddle's on, the girth is tight,  
I hope I'm on to stay,  
Farewell ye earth-born mortals,  
Get up Prince, we're away!

## THE OLD CARIBOO TRAIL

(While on the Cariboo early in March, I rode through the woods on Prince, my horse, the snow lay deep on the ground and we plodded through until we came out on the old Cariboo Trail. Poplars line each side of the trail, their bark is silver in colour, there was not a sound, not a footprint in the snow, as I sat there on my horse it seemed as if the peace of the world was centered in that spot.)

Freed from the pull of humanity,  
I stand in this temple of white;  
The poplars gleaming silver,  
Touched by the sun's early light.  
The snow lies deeply around me  
On this trail a century old.  
I think of the men who made it,  
In their lusty search for gold.

I see their oxen plodding,  
Each wearily swinging head;  
Their drivers shouting and cursing  
Their long whips tipped with lead.  
I think of men in their cities  
Toiling so hard to live,  
The lost opportunities they fret for,  
The greatest of these to give.

Oh, men try to remember  
The promise God gave unto you,  
His presence always within,  
I know you will find this true.  
Call on this presence to help you  
It is always there on demand  
Only awaiting your asking,  
Test God's word in your plan.

Give to God of your talents,  
Give to men of your love,  
These are the Kingdom of Heaven,  
Thus is the law from above

God made this temple of silence,  
He knew I needed it so—  
I came to find peace  
And I found it on this trail of long ago.



## THE FORBIDDEN PLATEAU

Being tired and sick to death of humanity's demands,  
I asked God to take these things into His own hands,  
And lead me to where I could find quietness and rest,—  
Into a place where Him alone I'd find while on my quest  
Of the cause of this existence, in this world where we abide  
It had always been a question, caused by pain on every side.  
I wanted to be happy, to play along with the rest,  
But it never seemed to work, because of me, I grieve.

No matter what I did, no matter where I went—  
The people that I met, seemed on pleasure bent,  
To strangle or to cover some secret grief or pain,  
Till this disturbed me so, I would never go again.

Forbidden Plateau is sanctuary, for all God's kind  
Feathered or furred, or man, disturbed within his mind  
They have kept it free from fire, it stands in solitude,  
High above the ocean, its grandeur unsubdued.

So on Vancouver Island, high up on the Plateau,  
In solitude and stillness I thought that I would go.  
I took a guide, and horse to ride whose roaming in the hills,  
Thinking that I would wander wherever God so will.

I went into Camp McKenzie, where the lakes are full of fish,  
I learned to cast a fly so whenever I did wish  
A succulent breakfast, or treat for some kind friend,  
It was always there for me, when my rod I deigned to bend.  
Then I took the trail again high up in the hills,  
To Camp Marrywood, still in search of thrills.  
We climbed and rode in a quiet stillness you could feel,  
Until the peace I sought for, seemed to me so real.

You will see Castle Crag—so old it's crumbling with age,  
The scientist cannot tell its years, this grey and grand old sage.  
Moss Island—surrounded by waters so deep  
They are almost black in colour—set in mountains steep.  
Then Mt. Albert Edward, our roof against the sky,  
With the deep blue skies above it, if you climb it you can spy,  
Stadcona Park, wild as left by God's Hand,  
Alone in wildest beauty, older than oldest man.

So when you are tired of self, fed up with your fellow men,  
Just go across to Courtenay, and climb to your journey's end.  
For you will never regret it, or I should tell you so—  
The peace you sought is there on this Plateau.



## TINY

(A letter to the Blue mountain pony that carried me safely on several trips into the Canadian Rockies, the most spectacular being the one into Paradise Valley over the Saddle Back Pass at an altitude of 7100 feet.)

Come on Tiny, you are ready and I am ready too,  
We're going into Paradise with our friendly guide, called Lou,  
He has fed and watered you, rubbed you down until you shine,  
Soon we'll hit the trail for Saddle Back, little pal of mine.

The trail is steep and rocky as up and up we'll climb,  
Till we reach our goal on Saddle Back, where the wind blows all the time.

We'll stretch our legs and rub our knees until we're sore no more,  
Then take the trail again to the valley's floor.

Two thousand feet we will drop down, scared as we can be—  
Holding our breath and saddles tight, trusting all to thee.  
So don't stumble Tiny, or jump at that bee's sting—  
For if you do, they'll carry me out, between two poles I'll swing.

Will you remember, the mountains towering height?  
The pinnacles and glaciers, the meadows sweet and light?  
The Giant's Steps, where the waters rush and roar  
Till it's time to go again to the valley's floor?

I tied you up and left you, then started up the trail,  
To follow the course of the mountain stream, as it flowed from its  
    coast of mail—  
Of snow and ice—then I met him—a moose with antlers wide,  
Grazing in his own habitat, along the mountain side.

He stared at me and I at him, until I shook with fright,  
Uncertain whether to stare him down, or take a coward's flight,

I backed away—thinking the better course  
Would be to disappear—than stay and face remorse.

He stood there quietly, watching while I went,  
Not disturbed or angry, nor my presence did he resent  
But I'll remember him, Tiny, as long as this life's ken—  
An emblem of dignity and pride, of nature's noblemen.

I found you where I left you, standing patiently  
Beside the feathery Tamarac, waiting there for me.  
I mounted and we started down along the silent trail,  
With Lou our guide to lead us back to our dinner pail.

Will you remember Porky waddling along the trail,  
His quills all raised in anger, holding high his tail?  
How Lou jumped off and threw his glove right on Porky's back  
And he hit it with his tail, a resounding whack?

But we got our quills, each one of us, to every home to show  
That we had been in Paradise, amidst the ice and snow  
You'll remember the Paint brush as we sat around the fire  
Drinking our coffee with our lunch, but stop—I'll never tire.

Well, Tiny, this trip is over, and I must wend my way  
Back to the world of busy men—I hope not long to stay—  
Just long enough to tell them of the beauties I have seen,  
The pleasant folk I have met—Lou and you—then dream.







## LAKE LOUISE

(I stood on the Lookout on Mt. Fairview, about 1100 feet above Lake Louise, on August 24th, 1903, when it as it appeared to me.)

Have you ever stood on Fairview, looking down on Lake Louise,  
Watched the lights and shadows blending, the reflections of the trees  
As they climbed onward, upward, row on row, as if they meant  
To reach the topmost summit, then pause—their substance spent?

Then across Bow Valley, at the mountains bare and cold,  
With their castellated turrets, untold sons old  
Then up the lake, Victoria, with her glacier grim and white—  
The sunlight reflecting a brilliant glorious light?

Well, go and do it, you tired business folk,  
No matter if the market's wrong, and left you almost broke,  
Some one died—well what of it—they're only free to roam  
Midst God's glorious beauties—free to call it home.



## A GOLDEN SUNSET OVER LAKE LOUISE

(One evening after dinner, while staying at Lake Louise, I strolled down to the lake and witnessed a scene, the like of which I never hope to see again, so ethereal, so majestic was it in its exquisite beauty.)

I watched the sun a-setting, shining through clouds of white  
On Victoria's glacier gleaming, in a pure and golden light.  
A golden glacier, I must be dreaming,  
Such a thing it cannot be,  
As I gaze in awe and wonder, in untold ecstasy

But no: I am not dreaming, there it is in purest gold—  
A glacier always white, forbidding, always grim and cold.  
Now in this golden sunset taking on a golden sheen,  
Reflecting in Louise before me  
A miracle of light, a dream

A dream of untold wonders of life and what it means  
If we lift our eyes to beauty—seeing only through the screens  
Of faith and trust and beauty, and greatest love,  
A miracle of life as promised  
By our Father, God, above.

## PARADISE VALLEY

(A party of us rode into "Paradise Valley," which lies about nine miles from "Lake Louise," over the "Saddle Back Pass" at an altitude of 7000, then dropped down the other side to the Valley. We had a conscientious guide, who saw to it that we should miss none of the wonderful scenery, created by God and left untouched by the hand of man.)

Paradise Valley, left alone, ages and ages ago,  
Alone in majestic beauty, covered with ice and snow  
Mt. Temple rising above you, in towering grandeur and pride,  
Waiting the time of melting, when the ice would leave your side

To expose to us your pinnacles, your glaciers cold and green,  
The soft blue green of your meadows, your trees so straight and slim.  
The Giant's steps, where the waters, freed from their icy bed,  
Rush and roar to the valley's floor, as on their way they sped.

The delicate perfume of your flowers, their colours rare and bold;  
You fed and nurtured at your breast, despite the icy cold,  
You warmed them and fed them, they bloomed for us to see,  
Shone forth in all their glory, to render thanks to thee.

The moose and deer, they all are here, the bear, the porcupine,  
The mountain goats climb up your slopes to seek their food and dine  
Twice I rode to see you, and I will go again,  
The "Glory of God" I called you, for such you are to men.





## SYMPHONY IN TONE AND COLOUR

### LITTLE BEE HIVE

Yes, a symphony in tone and colour, is what I see from where  
I stand on Little Bee Hive, high on this eagle's lair—  
Roaring down the valley, rushing on toward me,  
A storm cloud full of thunder, part of this symphony

Mr. Lefroy, cold, defiant—waiting for the storm,  
To break on her snow-capped summit, standing there in scorn,  
Scorn of the wind and hail, scorn of the icy blast,  
Let the wind howl, the thunder roar, she'll stand as in the past!

When time was first created, till time shall be no more,  
She'll stand in towering pride, while round the battles roar  
So men, take heed of her, note how she stands alone,  
With naught but God, to strengthen, the strength that is as stone.

But hush! the storm is ending, in the silence I can hear,  
The whistle of the marmot, in notes so pure and clear  
A rainbow forms before me, to guide me on my way,  
Down the trail on the mountain side, but a still voice bids me stay

And witness more of this symphony, this miracle that is wrought  
Of mountains, lakes and glaciers, it gives me food for thought,  
Two thousand feet below me, the Chalet is standing there,  
To tempt me down the mountain, but I stay in my eagle's lair

To watch the sun a-setting, to see the birds fly home,  
The outline of the mountains, against the sky's great dome.  
Then I'll go down to the Chalet, to food and friends and bridge,  
But my mind and heart are roaring there along that mountain ridge.

## LAKE O'HARA

(I rode *into* Lake O'Hara *one morning*. It is about sixteen miles from Lake Louise on the Canadian Rockies. At the full beauty of its setting burst upon me, I closed my eyes to prove to myself that I was not dreaming. There she lay deep in her snow-fringed setting.)

Lake O'Hara, gem of gems,  
Set within thy mountains deep,  
Pringed about with pearls agleaming,  
In thy early mornings deep.

There thou sleepest in thy beauty,  
Waiting for the sun to rise,  
O'er the mountain tops come soaring  
Till the sleep has left your eyes.

Then you'll gleam and sparkle, sparkle,  
Like diamonds set in emerald green  
As I stand alone in wonder  
Thinking this is but a dream.

A gleam of beauty so entrancing  
That I cannot—dare not wake,  
Lest I know that I am dreaming  
And find you gone, when I awake.



## A RAY OF LIGHT

(One cold grey morning I was sitting myself at the breakfast table, and glanced up to see the sun coming from the clouds; a ray shone through the Venetian band across my table and enveloped me.)

The sun bursts through the clouds,  
A great light dawns on me;  
Of GOD and all His glories—  
Shining behind the sea—

Of doubts and fears, pain and joy,  
Love, conflict, hate,  
Wrongs humanity upon itself has wrought,  
By power, greed, and hate.

My fire burns brightly in the grate  
My table laid for me,  
While others are hungry, cold, alone,  
Alone in misery

Why didn't Thou bring this home to me  
My God, my Father, Christ?  
Unless it is my turn has come  
To serve Thee in this life.

Show me the way, for I would know,  
And no mistake would make—  
But only serving Thee, MY GOD,  
In Christ's Thy spent wake.



## A LONELY SOLDIER IN A STRANGE CITY

(This is an incident, as told to me by one of our fighting men. He asked me to put it in verse for him.)

I was wandering alone in the city, dressed in my uniform,  
Seeking some place of worship, one sunny April morn,  
I heard an organ playing in a cathedral close at hand,  
The music seemed to call me, saying, "Come in thou lonely man."

"I am here to give you comfort, to relieve your loneliness,  
To satisfy your aching need, to ease your soul's distress."  
The organ called me strongly, I listened to its tone  
Until my heart responded, and I was not alone.

The music of the universe was round me as I stood  
Listening with heart attuned, in an exalted mood,  
I entered through the doorway in the dim and quiet light,  
I felt a presence near me, of God in all His might.

The music ebbed and flowed, in the distance I could hear  
The sound of childish voices singing low and clear.  
Then the clash of cymbals, as men with microphone  
Entered to send the music out to every zone.

The organ, the children's voices, the cymbals all combine  
In one grand burst of music of the soul divine  
Oh God I thank Thee, that is Thy gracious plan  
Thou didn't put the love of music in Thy creation—Man.





## THE QUEST OF A BROKEN HEART

Why gav'st Thou us a heart—God  
Why not a mind and soul?  
For it is the heart, that makes it hard  
To reach the God-given goal.

'Tis the heart, will break—God  
Suffer disillusion, distress,  
When those we thought sincere,  
Prove their thoughts, were not the best.

When we lose our loved ones,  
'Tis our hearts that suffer pain,  
Makes us doubt Your goodness,  
That our lives are lived in vain.

The eternal question "Why"  
Is always in our mind  
Seeking the cause of existence,  
On this sphere of Thine.

\* \* \*

### THE ANSWER

My child I did not close the door to truth  
"Seek and ye shall find"  
Follow the "Christ" as ye are bid,  
In this "Book" of mine.

You came to this terrestrial sphere;  
"I did not ask," you say,  
"I do not know from whence I came;  
I cannot find the way."

You chose your work WHY? WHERE?  
"I do not know," you say,  
Open the door to memory,  
There's but one Mind, one Way

## SUNDAY EVENING

The chiming of the bells has died away,  
The worshippers are settled in their seats,  
The sinking sun denotes the passing day,  
As solemn cadence, evening air repeats,  
The aureole light enwraps the towering spire  
Like golden finger pointing to the sky,  
And peace prevails on hamlet, town and shire,  
As to their nests God's feathered creatures fly

A subtle calmness permeates the air,  
A sacred hush is what it seems to be,  
No other night, though seeming quite as fair,  
Like Sabbath eve, brings peacefulness to me.  
I've always felt whoso'er has been my home,  
That Sunday evening held peculiar charm,  
As though cathedral's consecrated dome,  
Covered the entire world to shield from harm.



## LOVE

It's indeed the greatest power on earth  
Be it Lover's, Parent's, Brother's,  
Whichever it is, how great its worth,  
Though the best of all, is Mother's,

Love makes us gracious, tender, kind  
And sees the best in all of us;  
Although some sage has said "Love's blind,"  
That it sees good is obvious.

Love's never despairing, but cheering,  
Always soothing if heart is downcast,  
Never in trials disappearing,  
But standing by friends till the last  
Making the hardened ones tender,  
O'er poverty casting a sheen,  
To the poorest cot lending a splendour,  
It makes of a pauper a queen;  
Is always forgiving and gentle,  
Never seeking reprisals for spite,  
Striving always to help, not to hinder,  
Coaxing erring ones back to the right,  
An angel in sickness or sorrow  
With patience and mercy it tends,  
Always preaching a brighter tomorrow,  
Its effort for good never ends,  
Preferring to give than receiving,  
Considerate in even small things,  
Faithful, even death not releasing,  
To "Semper Fidelis" it clings.



## TO WENDY-BARBARA -THE TIRELESS

Did you ever walk in the park,  
With a little maid aged four?  
She runs ahead, then runs back  
Then she runs some more,  
She comes running back to ask you please,  
If you will climb a tree,

And get for her a bird's nest high,  
It's too far for her, you see.

So to show that you are game—  
Not getting old and staid,  
You take off your shoes, and start to climb,  
Just to please a little maid.

You tear your dress, you skin your knees,  
Poor hands and feet are laid  
Upon the altar of your deuce  
To please a little maid.

And then she laughs and crows and laughs,  
Till her small form is bent,  
Because you see you can't get down  
That's your predicament.

She has the nest, but you have the tree,  
It did not seem so high,  
When you started on your climb  
With youth and birds to vie.

Well here I am—what shall I do?  
The ground seems awful far—  
I wish I'd played that game of golf—  
No matter what the par.

And left the birds and nests alone  
For some one else to find,  
Before I can get down from here,  
I'll surely lose my mind.

But down I slide with bark and twigs,  
Afraid I'll break a bone,  
The little maid says soberly—  
"I dare you best do home."

## TO MY FIRST BORN SON

There is something about a first-born son,  
Deep in a mother's heart,  
No matter how it is strained  
This cord will never part

Misunderstandings may creep in,  
Doubts and fears distress—  
But always there is this tie that binds  
Midst this life's work and stress.

I prayed that my children would be girls,  
Don't ask me why—unless  
I thought them dainty, sweet and kind,  
Sent to this world to bless.

But when God in my need did send  
You to me, my son—  
I knew what I'd never known before,  
A love that had just begun.

A son to carry on God's work  
Wherever he might be,  
Not even realizing in this life  
What this might mean to me.



## TO MY SON KENNETH ON HIS TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY

Kenneth, my son, you're twenty-one—

Big and brave and strong.

It seems but a day that you used to play

At Iqloo with toy sword and gun.

Do you remember the place by the creek

Where Hipparty used to play,

Dragging the salmon out by their tails

So wildly excited and gay?

Do you remember the tall, tall ferns?

The rocks all covered with moss?

The place by the creek where we used to lunch?

The logs we used to cross?

Do you remember the little boat

You built with a box and sack,

Then set sail on the deep blue sea

And I thought you would never come back?

Do you remember the little doe

Scared with a hunter's gun?

There she lay with a broken neck

Cold and dead in the sun.

You cried, my dear, as small boys cry—

And I held you in my arms

While you sobbed out your grief

At the first of life's alarms.

Those days are gone, my own dear son—

I could wish them back again

But life goes on and must be lived,

And boys grow into men.

# TAKAKKAW FALLS

## YOHO VALLEY

(I rode in to the Yoho Valley, to see the Takakkaw Falls, I climbed up to see the basin she had carved at the foot of the mountain, the mist was so thick that I was dripping wet, as I slipped and slid back to the trail. The Falls are said to be the second highest in the world.)

Takakkaw Falls so named by an Indian tribe,  
Who held you in awe and wonder, as down the mountain side  
you fell.

A god they thought you, with the mist flinging high,  
To veil your foaming beauty, from watchers standing by.  
You thunder down the mountain, the echoes you awake,  
They call and call, as a god who seeks his mate.

In one wild plunge you leap the rocks beneath,  
Where you have carved a basin, a shelter, a rocky sheath.  
But no you cannot rest, on and on you go,  
To the meeting of the waters, that will forever flow;

Till you fulfill your destiny, a thousand miles away,  
In the wild embrace of the ocean, where he will bid you stay.  
And forever cease your roaming, your grief for your mountain home,  
The high wild place of your birth, atop the mountain dome.

Men look at Takakkaw, her start from high above,  
The plunge to the abyss below, searching for her love.  
She wanders through the forest, through the desert and the plain  
Always seeking, seeking, her lost love to regain,

Well—such is the story of men, as they leap from their Father's love  
They will never, never rest, 'till they return to God above.

## MEDITATION

While walking in the Park, one cold and wintry day,  
All around the leaves were lying, symbols of decay.  
I mused as I was walking on the seeming death around,  
To the human eye the uselessness of these leaves upon the ground.

Then methinks, of the year a-passing, of the deeds we have wrought  
That must be buried and arise to enrich our future thought.  
Thus it is with everything, be it joy or sorrow or pain;  
It must be borne and buried, to bring to us a future gain.

So let it be, knowing always that in God's mysterious way,  
Our lives must be progressive—not left lying in decay.







